

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 03517 01 OF 02 150801Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01
TRSE-00 OMB-01 FCSC-01 EB-07 COME-00 FRB-03 DHA-02
ORM-02 SCA-01 /076 W
----- 006130 /11

R 141445Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1651
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRAGUE 3517

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CZ
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK

REFS A. PRAGUE 3439 B. STATE 275892 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: I MET DECEMBER 8 WITH CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN
MINISTER CHNOUPEK FOR WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE CANDID
AND FORTHRIGHT DISCUSSION OF MAJOR BILATERAL ISSUES,
INCLUDING CLAIMS/GOLD, CSCE QUESTIONS OF FACILITATING
COMMERCIAL CONTACTS, REUNIFICATION OF DIVIDED FAMILIES, WORKING
CONDITIONS FOR JOURNALISTS, APPROVAL OF EXCHANGES AGREEMENT,
PRESS TREATMENT, AND ACCESS TO OFFICIALS, AS WELL AS OTHER ISSUES
OF LOCAL INTEREST. CHNOUPEK ACCENTED THE POSITIVE, BUT BOTH
OF US AGREED THAT MUCH WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE IN EFFORTS TO
NORMALIZE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRAGUE 03517 01 OF 02 150801Z

1. OPENING REMARKS: CHNOUPEK GAVE ME A CORDIAL WELCOME, NOTING

THAT SINCE MY ARRIVAL SOME SMALL POSITIVE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN -- IN PARTICULAR, ELIMINATION OF RESTRICTED AREAS AND CONCLUSION OF EXCHANGES AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. AS A GESTURE APPARENTLY INTENDED TO APPEAR FRIENDLY, HE SUGGESTED THAT CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENTAL ORGANS MIGHT CONCLUDE REVIEW OF EXCHANGES AGREEMENT TEXT "BY THE END OF JANUARY," ONE TO TWO MONTHS EARLIER THAN WE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND (REF A). I REGISTERED MY REGRET AT NOT HAVING BEEN RECEIVED EARLIER FOR A WORKING MEETING, BUT WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSION. CHNOUPEK ALSO REGRETTED OUR INFREQUENCY OF CONTACT, ALLEGING THAT AT ONE TIME IT HAD NOT BEEN UNCOMMON FOR HIM TO MEET US AMBASSADOR "ONCE A WEEK."

2. CLAIMS/GOLD: CHNOUPEK TURNED QUICKLY AS EXPECTED, TO DISCUSSION OF CLAIMS/GOLD. IN GENERAL, HE COVERED FAMILIAR GROUND, SAYING AT OUTSET THAT CLAIMS NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN POSITIVE STEPS TOWARD IMPROVING OUR "POOR" BILATERAL RELATIONS BUT THAT SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM HAD BEEN BLOCKED BY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION. HE COMPLAINED THAT GOC HAD BEEN OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED ONLY ONE MONTH AGO THAT DUE TO CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO "RENEGOTIATE" THE 1974 SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT: (COMMENT: OUR NOTE DID NOT SAY "RENEGOTIATE" BUT "REEXAMINE". - STATE 272202). HE REVIEWED THIS ISSUE AT SOME LENGTH AND SEEMED TO BE TRYING IN PART TO IMPRESS UPON ME THAT, HAVING WAITED THIS LONG, GOC COULD WAIT LONGER FOR SETTLEMENT UNTIL IT OBTAINS TERMS IT CONSIDERS ACCEPTABLE. CHNOUPEK ALSO COMPLAINED OF LINKAGE BETWEEN SECTION 408 OF TRADE ACT AND THE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT. HE DID, HOWEVER, SAY THAT RENEGOTIATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL MATTER AND ASKED WHAT "GUARANTEE" THERE WAS THAT A NEW SETTLEMENT MIGHT NOT BE REJECTED. HE CLOSED HIS STATEMENT BY SAYING THE TWO SIDES WERE NOW BACK TO SQUARE ONE AND SHOULD DECIDE ON HOW TO PROCEED.

3. IN RESPONSE, I EMPHASIZED THAT CONGRESS HAS A LEGITIMATE ROLE TO PLAY IN FOREIGN NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT ITS MEMBERS FEEL STRONGLY THAT OUT CITIZENS SHOULD BE ADEQUATELY REIMBURSED. THERE COULD BE NO "GUARANTEE" PER SE THAT A NEW NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY APPROVED BY CONGRESS, BUT A FORTHCOMING APPROACH BY THE GOC IN THE SEARCH FOR A COMPROMISE WOULD INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL. I REITERATED THE NECESSITY OF A CLAIMS SETTLEMENT PRIOR TO TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF MFN. COMMENT: IN PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PRAGUE 03517 01 OF 02 150801Z

CLAIMS/GOLD, GOC OFFICIALS HAVE REFUSED TO ADMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF RENEGOTIATION AND HAVE SPOKEN ONLY OF MAKING SOME "CHANGES IN MODALITIES." I TAKE CHNOUPEK'S WILLINGNESS TO SPEAK OF RENEGOTIATION WITHOUT HEDGING AS A CLEAR SIGNAL THAT GOC IS NOW RESIGNED TO HAVING TO RENEGOTIATE AND IS READY TO START. END COMMENT.

4. CIVIL AIR: CHNOUPEK BROUGHT UP EXTENSION OF AIR TRANSPORT

AGREEMENT IN CONTEXT OF ADDITIONAL MINOR STEPS THAT COULD BE TAKEN TO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING RELATIONS, AND NOTED THAT TALKS BETWEEN PANAM AND CSA WERE TO BEGIN IN LONDON DECEMBER 7.

I DID NOT RESPOND, SINCE I SAW NO POINT IN LETTING GOC KNOW WE WERE PREPARED TO RENEW FOR AN INTERIM PERIOD, UNTIL WE SEE HOW LONDON TALKS ARE GOING.

5. CSCE: BUSINESS REPRESENTATION: I BRIEFLY TOUCHED ON CONTINUING UNCERTAINTIES OVER TAXES, ABILITY TO HIRE AND KEEP CZECHOSLOVAK PERSONNEL, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF ACCOMODATIONS WHICH MUST BE CLEARED AWAY BEFORE US FIRMS CAN BE EXPECTED TO SHOW INTEREST IN OPENING OFFICES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. I EXPRESSED HOPE THERE WOULD SOON BE SOME CLARIFICATION. CHNOUPEK THOUGHT HE KNEW WHAT I WAS REFERRING TO, BUT THAT, IN VIEW OF HIS COUNTRY'S PLANNED ECONOMY, CERTAIN "COMPLICATIONS" AND BUREAUCRATIC DELAY HAD TO BE EXPECTED IN PROVIDING FOR NEW COMMERCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT GOC IS IN PROCESS OF CREATING THE "MATERIAL AND PRACTICAL" CONDITIONS FOR AN INTENSIFIED ECONOMIC DIALOGUE WITH THE WEST AND IN THIS EFFORT WAS PLANNING TO CONSTRUCT AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER. HE POINTED TO PROGRESS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE APPROVAL ALREADY OF APPLICATIONS BY 18 FOREIGN FIRMS TO SET UP REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES IN PRAGUE AND NOTED INTEREST OF SOME US FIRMS IN CONTACTS WITH CSSR ENTERPRISES AND TRADE ORGANIZATIONS. COMMENT: I TRANSLATE CHNOUPEK'S REMARKS TO MEAN THAT THINGS MAY WELL EVENTUALLY GET BETTER HERE FOR WESTERN BUSINESS, BUT WE WILL NOT BE STARTLED BY THE SPEED OF IMPROVEMENT. END COMMENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 03517 02 OF 02 150823Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01
TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00 FRB-03 FCSC-01 DHA-02
ORM-02 SCA-01 /076 W
----- 006419 /11

R 141445Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1652
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRAGUE 3517

6. DIVIDED FAMILIES. I DROVE HOME THAT THIS ISSUE IS A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE ONE IN WASHINGTON. THUS, GOC ACTIONS TOWARD MEETING THE REMAINING 55 OF 65 REQUESTS FOR EMIGRATION ON LIST WE GAVE MFA IN OCTOBER 1975, PLUS EMIGRATION OF THE 19 CHILDREN WE WERE RECENTLY TOLD COULD LEAVE FOR US WOULD BE STUDIED WITH GREAT INTEREST IN THE US. PROBING OF THIS ISSUE REVEALED THAT GOC HAS THE MATTER OF CHILDREN'S EXIT PERMITS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION, BUT IS AWAITING ACTION BY THE CHILDRENS' PARENTS TO FILL OUT NECESSARY FORMS AT CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. CHNOUPEK MADE LINKAGE BETWEEN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND PROGRESS ON DIVIDED FAMILIES ALSO BROUGHT UP GABRIEL CASE.

7. MEDIA TREATMENT OF US. I NEXT TACKLED PERENNIAL IRRITANT OF CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA TREATMENT OF US. BESIDES CRITICIZING BLATANTLY SLANTED COVERAGE OF US IN LOCAL MEDIA, I MENTIONED RECENTLY-CONCLUDED NEGOTIATIONS ON THE EXCHANGES AGREEMENT AND CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRAGUE 03517 02 OF 02 150823Z

SAID IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF IT WERE TO BE IMPAIRED FROM THE START BY LACK OF COOPERATION IN FIELD OF PRESS. CHNOUPEK COUNTERATTACKED SAYING THAT AMBASSADOR JOHANES HAD BEEN GREETED SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN US BY VICIOUS PRESS ATTACKS AND THAT PRESIDENT HUSAK WAS ALSO A FREQUENT VICTIM. I REMINDED CHNOUPEK OF DISTINCTION OF POLICY, WHICH HAD TO BE DRAWN BETWEEN US FREE PRESS, WHOSE INDEPENDENCE WAS PROVED BY ITS PURSUIT OF THE WATERGATE AFFAIR, AND THE OFFICIALLY ORCHESTRATED PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST US IN CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA.

8. SEEGER VISA REFUSAL: IN ABOVE CONTEXT, AS REPORTED MORE FULLY IN PRAGUE 3493, I OBJECTED STRENUOUSLY TO DENIAL OF VISA TO MURRAY SEEGER OF L.A. TIMES TO ACCOMPANY LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC TO PRAGUE AND BRATISLAVA. CHNOUPEK CLAIMED IGNORANCE OF THE REFUSAL--A CLAIM I FIND SPECIOUS SINCE I HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH HIS DEPUTY SPACIL THE PREVIOUS DAY. I ALSO HIT CHNOUPEK ON GENERAL PROBLEM OF REFUSAL OF VISAS TO US JOURNALISTS, POINTING OUT WE HAVE SO FAR NOT REFUSED VISAS TO ANY CZECHOSLOVAK JOURNALISTS, WHILE GOC HAS OFTEN DENIED VISAS TO US CORRESPONDENTS. I NOTED THAT US LAW PERMITS ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS STRICTLY ON BASIS OF RECIPROCITY.

9. ACCESS: I POINTED OUT TO CHNOUPEK THE EMBASSY'S CONTINUING DISAPPOINTMENT OVER DELAYS AND OBSTRUCTIONS ENCOUNTERED IN TRYING TO MAKE CALLS ON CZECHOSLOVAK OFFICIALS IN SPITE PRESIDENT HUSAK'S ASSURANCES TO ME ON ACCESS. STRESSING THAT WE SIMPLY WANTED TO GET TO UNDERSTAND CZECHOSLOVAKIA BETTER, I CITED EXAMPLES OF DIFFICULTIES MET BY POLITICAL SECTION, ECONOMIC SECTION (INCLUDING AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE), AND DEFENSE ATTACHE, AS WELL AS BY VISITORS TO PRAGUE. I ALSO CALLED ATTENTION TO DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING APPOINTMENTS WITH PARTY LEADERS. CHNOUPEK RETORTED THAT CZECHOSLOVAK AMBASSADOR JOHANES HAS STILL HAD NO DISCUSSIONS OF A POLITICAL NATURE (READ "WITH SECSTATE") SINCE ARRIVING IN WASHINGTON. AS FOR CONTACT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY,

HE THOUGHT THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM. ALTHOUGH CONTACTS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS HAD TO BE CHanneled THROUGH DIPLOMATIC PROTOCOL, HE SAW NO REASON WHY THERE SHOULD BE ANY PROBLEM WITH THEM EITHER. CHNOUPEK INVITED ME TO CONTACT HIMM PERSONALLY IF MY STAFF CONTINUED TO ENCOUNTER RESISTANCE. COMMENT:
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PRAGUE 03517 02 OF 02 150823Z

WE WILL SOON BE TESTING THIS BY SUBMITTING NEW SERIES OF REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS. PAST PERFORMANCE DOES NOT LEAD US TO BE VERY SANGUINE ABOUT RESULTS. END COMMENT. CHNOUPEK TRIED TO FINESSE MY COMMENTS ON DIFFICULTIES OF ACCESS BY US MILITARY ATTACHES TO CZECHOSLOVAK MILITARY PERSONNEL. NOR DID HE COMMIT HIMSELF TO FACILITATING MY OWN ACCESS TO COMMUNIST PARTY FIGURES.

9. PORT SECURITY: SINCE THE EMBASSY HAD RECENTLY ENCOUNTERED UNCONSCIONABLE DIFFICULTIES IN LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA'S VISIT, HAD BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN A VISA FOR MURRAY SEEGER, AND HAD EXPERIENCED MANY SIMILAR PROBLEMS WITH THE LOCAL BUREAUCRACY, I DECIDED AGAINST GIVING CHNOUPEK THE NOTE REDUCING NOTIFICATION PERIOD FOR ENTRY OF CZECHOSLOVAK SHIPS INTO US HARBORS (REF B). WE WILL SAVE THAT FOR ANOTHER, MORE PROPITIOUS OCCASION.

10. ALTHOUGH OUR TALKS WERE NEARING THE TWO-HOUR MARK, CHNOUPEK TURNED TO FOREIGN POLICY UNDER CARTER ADMINISTRATION. STRESSING DEVELOPMENTS AT THE RECENT BUCHAREST MEETING, HE EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF MAKING PROGRESS IN DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS AND ENLIVENING SALT TALKS. I TOOK LINE THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT HAS EMPHASIZED CONTINUITY OF US POLICY AND THAT HIS APPOINTMENT OF CYRUS VANCE AS SECSTATE IS CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT HE MEANS IT. I GAVE CHNOUPEK COPY OF NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW WITH VANCE.

11. LOCAL MATTERS: I ALSO TOOK UP WITH CHNOUPEK SOME LOCAL MATTERS THAT I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO GET HIS SUBORDINATES TO MOVE ON SATISFACTORILY-- LOCAL PERSONNEL PROBLEMS AND THEFTS FROM RESIDENCE AND CHANCERY. HE INSTRUCTED ZANTOVSKY TO LOOK INTO THESE MATTERS.

WITHIN TWO DAYS ZANTOVSKY HAD SOLVED ONE PERSONNEL PROBLEM AND HAD ARRANGED FOR A MEETING BETWEEN THE APPROPRIATE CRIMINAL SECURITY PEOPLE AND OUR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER.

12. BIOGRAPHIC: IN THIS TALK I FOUND CHNOUPEK WELL-INFORMED AND CONFIDENT, APPARENTLY ASSURED THAT HE HAS CONSIDERABLE CLOUT AND CAN MAKE DECISIONS RELATIVELY FREELY. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO HIS ABILITY TO SELL HIS LEADERSHIP ON THE AUSTRIAN DEMAND FOR SETTLING THAT CLAIMS DISPUTE. HE CAME ON LIKE A GOOD POKER PLAYER, TENDED TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE BUT WAS EFFECTIVE IN MAKING THE RIGHT REJOINDER AT THE RIGHT TIME. HE REITERATED WHAT WE HAD HEARD EARLIER, THAT HE HAD PERSONALLY TAKEN LEADING CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PRAGUE 03517 02 OF 02 150823Z

ROLE IN SEEKING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA, GERMANY AND THE US, AND WAS SURPRISED BY THE DIFFICULTIES HE HAD ENCOUNTERED WITH US, WHICH WAS FAR HARDER TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THAN OTHER TWO COUNTRIES. HE RECALLED THAT HE HAD ONCE KNOWN TH DOSSIERS ON RELATIONS WITH US BY HEART AND SAID HE WISHED TO DO THAT AGAIN. HIS UNDERSTANDING OF ENGLISH IS GOOD ENOUGH TO PERMIT HIM TO CORRECT THE INTERPRETER. BYRNE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PRAGUE03517
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760461-0368
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761244/aaaabmck.tel
Line Count: 302
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PRAGUE 3439
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK
TAGS: PFOR, CZ, US, (CHNOUPEK, BOHUSLAV)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006